VZCZCXRO7462
RR RUEHBZ RUEHDU RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHSA #2628/01 3381415
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 031415Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6612
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
INFO RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 6333
RUEHDU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 0465
RUEHJO/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 8680

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 07 PRETORIA 002628

DEPT FOR OES/PCI, OES/ENV, AND AF/S DEPT PASS EPA/OIA,

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A TAGS: <u>SENV</u> <u>SOCI</u> <u>ETRD</u> <u>SF</u>

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY MONTHLY BRIEFINGS, NOVEMBER 2008

PRETORIA 00002628 001.2 OF 007

11. (U) Summary: This is the South African Environment, Science and Technology Monthly Briefings newsletter, November 2008, Volume 3, Number 11, prepared by the U.S. Embassy Pretoria, South Africa.

Topics of the newsletter:

- -- US EMBASSY AND UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA INAUGURATE U.S. SCIENCE READING ROOM
- -- IVORY SALES RAISE MILLIONS IN REVENUE
- -- GREENPEACE OPENS ITS FIRST OFFICE IN AFRICA
- -- DEAT TO MANAGE CDM REGULATORY AUTHORITY
- -- WESTERN CAPE OPENS CDM OFFICE
- -- KRUGER CROCODILE DEATHS UNDER INVESTIGATION
- -- CRADLE OF HUMANKIND THREATENED BY POLLUTION?
- -- SKILLS SHORTAGE UNDERMINING SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES
- -- HUNTER CLAIMS SELF- DEFENSE AFTER KILLING GPS-COLLARED LEOPARD
- -- JOBURG ZOO GORILLA SEARCHING FOR A MATE
- -- SOUTH AFRICA TO PUBLISH CARBON STORAGE ATLAS BY 2010
- -- SAEON AND CSIR JOIN IN COLLABORATIVE GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SERVICE (COGIS)
- -- BABY BOOM AT JOBURG ZOO
- -- BIRDLIFE SA SUES TO STOP MINING
- -- RECREATIONAL FISHERS AND SCIENTISTS COOPERATE IN SHARK RESEARCH
- -- BLUE FLAG BEACHES ANNOUNCED
- -- MONTHLY FACTOID

U.S. Embassy and University of Pretoria Inaugurate U.S. Science Reading Room

12. (U) U.S. Ambassador Eric M. Bost and University of Pretoria (UP) Vice-Chancellor Professor Calie Pistorius officially opened the new, U.S.-sponsored Mae Jemison Science Reading Room on November 21, 12008. The Science Reading Room has approximately 3,000 books and films, and 58 magazine subscriptions with an emphasis on science, health, technology, the environment and related topics. The reading room has five computers with internet access, and exhibition space that will serve as a venue for rotating exhibits, science experiments and demonstrations. The 50-seat auditorium will be the site of lectures, presentations and digital video conference programs with national and international experts. The total cost of the project is approximately R2.5 million (\$250,000).

- ¶3. (U) U.S. Ambassador Eric M. Bost noted, "The Mae Jemison U.S. Science Reading Room is one of the most ambitious long-term education projects undertaken by the U.S. Mission to South Africa. It is a significant example of pro-active partnership between the Embassy and an important South African institution, the University of Pretoria, in response to the South African government's call for better science education for underprivileged young people." UP Mamelodi Campus Director Edwin Smith said the primary beneficiaries of the Reading Room will be local high school students. These students will participate in structured and planned programs, as well as open access to the facility. Smith added that University students and faculty interested in science will also have access to the Reading Room and its facilities. He said, "The University envisages its Math and Science after-school program benefiting from the facility and resources, as well as its other community engagement programs needing to utilize the facility and resources."
- 14. (U) The Reading Room is named after the first woman of color to go in to space, Dr. Mae Jemison, whose historic flight took place on September 12, 1992. Dr. Jemison served as a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) astronaut for six years. She is currently the CEO of BioSentient Corporation, a medical technology Qcurrently the CEO of BioSentient Corporation, a medical technology company and Chair of the Board of Directors of the Dorothy Jemison Foundation for Excellence. Jemison sent a message that was read out at the opening: "Science and mathematics education must be a

PRETORIA 00002628 002.2 OF 007

priority for all students. Remember, our children are innately curious, energetic, motivated and enthusiastic and reading is the key." The Reading Room already has one enthusiastic fan. Grade Three student Donald Thabang said, "I hope we can come here every day."

Ivory Sales Raise Millions in Revenue

15. (U) The South African National Parks (SANParks) auctioned fifty-one tons of stockpiled elephant ivory on November 6, 2008. The once-off sale of sixty-three lots of ivory piles, which had been approved in advance by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), raised over \$6.7 million at an average price of \$142 per kilogram. Buyers included twelve Chinese and twenty-two Japanese nationals who purchased the ivory using brochures depicting the sixty-three ivory lots. (Buyers had been allowed to view the ivory the day before the sale.) SANParks CEO Dr. David Mabunda said "a significant amount of the revenue" would be used to "stamp down on poaching of any kind", with the balance being used for elephant-related research, general conservation, buying more land and employing additional rangers. CITES General Secretary Willem W. Winjnstekers attended the auction as an observer. A total of one hundred and one tons of ivory was auctioned off from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, generating nearly \$15 million in revenues. The International Fund for Animal Welfare opposed the sale arguing that it would only encourage poaching.

Greenpeace Opens Its First Office in Africa

16. (U) The international environmental group Greenpeace opened its first office in Africa, in Johannesburg in mid-November. Greenpeace Executive Director Amadou Kanoute said the move is their first step in addressing climate change, deforestation and over-fishing in Africa. He added that Greenpeace will encourage South Africa to its ease dependence on coal and to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Kanoute said that South Africa should spend its money on the development of renewable energies infrastructure and energy efficiency. He criticized ESKOM's plans to expand power output through nuclear power stations. Greenpeace will open two more offices in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal in 2009. The focus of the South Africa office will be on climate change, while the focus of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Senegal offices will be on deforestation and over-fishing, respectively.

DEAT to Manage CDM Regulatory Authority

17. (U) Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Marthinus van Schalkwyk announced that South Africa's Designated National Authority (DNA), which oversees the registration of Clean

Development Mechanism (CDM) projects in South Africa, could be transferred from the Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) in the near future. Van Schalkwyk made the announcement at the launch of South Africa's second Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) report. National Business Initiative (NBI) CEO Andre Fourie agreed with this move, noting "We must streamline the CDM process, because we are struggling with that, and the bureaucracy is killing us." South Qstruggling with that, and the bureaucracy is killing us." South Africa lags behind other developing countries such as China, India and Brazil in the registration of CDM projects. To date, only fourteen CDM projects have been registered in South Africa by Sasol, Omnia, PetroSA, Corobrik, PPC, and the City of Cape Town. South Africa's first CDM project involved retrofitting 2,000 low cost homes in Khayelitsha, and was inaugurated in August 2007. Carbon finance accounted for 30% of the project's capital and the carbon credits for the first two years were sold to the UK government. Underlying financing was made available through DEAT.

Western Cape Opens CDM Office

18. (U) The Western Cape provincial government has established its own Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) office, and is planning one of the largest CDM projects in South Africa -- a public transport sector project in collaboration with the Italian government worth approximately \$77 million. Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs Director Mark Gordon said, "We are busy working out our carbon baseline now, and we estimate that the value is \$76 million." Strong political support for renewable energy technologies exists

PRETORIA 00002628 003.2 OF 007

in the Western Cape, and the province is moving ahead on plans to implement renewable energy generation. Gordon said the Western Cape has set broad targets of 15% renewable energy generation by 2014. The province also wants to achieve 10% energy efficiency by 2014, and realize a 10% reduction in carbon emissions. Gordon believes these targets can easily be met by capitalizing on available wind power.

19. (U) Gordon noted: "We have also commissioned a grid study with the German government to look at wind development projects, primarily on the West Coast, and to look at grid accessibility." Gordon commented that one major hurdle faced by investors was environmental impact assessment (EIA) methodology. He said the Western Cape would provide "some sort of certainty" on EIA methodology on where to locate wind farms. Gordon noted that the Western Cape environmental authorities would advise investors about no-go areas and tell them not to waste their time where no EIAs would be granted. Gordon said the Western Cape had more than 2,400 megawatts of wind potential.

Kruger Crocodile Deaths under Investigation

Service Danie PQnaar announced establishment of a new multidisciplinary team to investigate the continued deaths of large numbers of crocodiles in the Olifants River system of the Kruger National Park. Pienaar stated that the deaths were a "serious and growing environmental problem," and that scientists remain "baffled" as to what caused the sudden deaths. Pienaar said: "We suspected that ongoing pollution of the system would eventually result in some kind of ecological disaster, but the large number of crocodile deaths caught us by surprise." Their deaths have been attributed to pansteatitis, a disease that gradually renders the crocodiles immobile. Postmortem analysis of the crocodiles found no evidence that they died from pesticides or heavy metals. Scientists estimate that more than 300 crocodiles have died since May in the Olifants River gorge system, a region that hosts a population of between 1,000 - 2,000 crocodiles. Pienaar conceded that systems for controlling and monitoring environmental damage were inadequate, commenting that a "top predator collapse indicates prolonged ecosystem stress, caused by human activities." He worried that

110. (U) South African National Parks (SANParks) Head of Science

111. (U) The new multidisciplinary team initiative, entitled the Consortium for the Restoration of the Olifants Catchment, includes experts from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), universities, the Department of Water and Forestry Affairs (DWAF), the Department for Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT),

there could be implications for human health since communities along the river continue to use untreated river water for washing and the Water Research Commission (WRC) and independent consultants. The Consortium will investigate the effects of pollution from industrial, mining and agricultural sources; monitor crocodile populations with tracking devices; and study how bulk water structures such as Mozambique's Massingir Dam have affected the river's health. The Massingir Dam raised its wall height recently, causing water to back up and deposit fine silt into the Olifants River.

- ¶12. (U) The Sterkfontein caves, a World Natural Heritage site and home of Mrs. Ples (a fossilized set of human remains considered to be 2.15 million years old) and over 700 other fossils dating to the early Stone Age, could be threatened by acidic mine drainage flowing into the dolomite karst rock base of the caves. Dolomite karst is formed by dissolution of soluble rocks such as limestone and dolomite. The water table in the area is rising as the gold mines in the area cease to operate. One expert estimates that more than fifteen mega-liters of contaminated water containing heavy metals has flowed into the Tweelopies Spruit River, through the Krugersdorp Game Reserve and towards the Sterkfontein caves since mining stopped in 2002.
- 113. (U) One local karst expert claims that the accumulation of heavy metals will destabilize the karst and cause sinkholes. Cradle of Humankind Environmental Manager Peter Mills agreed that there is a "huge mine decant problem" that will cost "billions to fix." He advised that there are monthly meetings between the mines and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF). Mills stated, "No one knows how water flows through the system. We don't even know if the mine decant is reaching the fossil site. Despite the fifteen

PRETORIA 00002628 004.2 OF 007

mega- liters, there is no evidence that it is coming close to the Sterkfontein caves." DWAF officials noted that a study is being conducted to determine if the decant is having an impact on the Cradle of Humankind site.

Skills shortage Undermining South African Universities

 ${ t \underline{1}} 14$. (U) A Sunday Times survey has revealed almost 600 vacant posts for professors and lecturers in five universities including: the University of Johannesburg (142 lecturers and 28 associate and full professors); University of Pretoria (127 posts); University of cape Town (75 vacant academic posts after 40 resignations this year); University of Zululand (31 lecturers and 14 professors in law, science and education); and University of Limpopo (182 vacant academic positions, including one professor, 5 lecturers, 12 professors in dentistry, 19 in pharmacy, and 5 in accounting). The University of Witswaterand did not provide information to the survey commenting that it "worked on the basis of budgets, not posts." Wits Deputy Vice Chancellor Rob Moore did acknowledge that the university has had difficulties filling staff in disciplines that "required highly skilled professionals and academics such as accounting, actuarial science, science and the humanities." 115. (U) Moore noted that professional sectors compete for a "proportionately shrinking pool of experienced graduates who are highly mobile and command a premium." Professors earn from R483,000 (\$48,300) to R669,000 (\$66,900). Some universities add a scarce skills allowance. UNISA has retained its accounting professors by allowing them to maintain private practices. North West University Chancellor Thomas Eloff confirmed that some chartered accounting professors earn more than R1M per year (\$100,000). He said, "You won't get a chartered account for less. You can only buy half their time." University of Limpopo Professor Mahlo Mokgalong Said Nedbank was sponsoring an accounting professor with a salary of R1 million (\$100,000) and the university will still have to add an additional R200,000 (\$20,000) to attract a candidate to Limpopo. University of Stellenbosch Engineering Dean Professor Arnold Schoonwinkel said it was "nearly impossible" to attract senior black engineers to lecturing posts. University of Free State Dean of Law Professor Voet du Plessis said suitable staff has not been found despite two years of advertising.

Hunter Claims Self- Defense after Killing GPS-Collared Leopard

116. (U) Farmer Tommy Thompson claimed self-defense after killing "Michael," one of eight Landmark Foundation GPS-collared leopards in the Eastern Cape Baviaaskloof Mega Reserve. Landmark Foundation Founder Bob Smuts said they had been tracking Michael for sixteen months. The Foundation works with local farmers encouraging non-lethal controls over the wild cat population. The Foundations pays farmers for losses which are verified as having been caused by wild cats that the Foundation has collared. Verifications are made by comparing the claims against data from the GPS in the cats collars. Smuts said the Foundation had been unable to download information from Michael's collar in recent months to determine if Thompson's losses were caused by the cat. Smuts noted that they had QThompson's losses were caused by the cat. Smuts noted that they had been trying to capture the cat when he was shot by Thompson. Thompson cut off the R35,000 (\$3,500) collar and the cat's feet and ears, and had begun curing the skin. Smuts said that forensic data indicated the cat had been killed with a sharp object, although Thompson insists the cat was shot. Thompson claims he was hunting the leopard with his dogs when it attacked him.

Joburg Zoo Gorilla Searching for a Mate

117. (U) Johannesburg Zoo's lone gorilla Makolo has been alone in his enclosure since the zoo's other gorilla Lisa died two years ago. The zoo has placed an application with the gorilla studbooks of the European Endangered Special Program (EEP) which matches gorillas in captivity for a replacement. The zoo is currently twelfth on the list of global zoos waiting for gorillas. Primate Curator Althea Guinsberg noted that Makolo is not completely alone. He has antelope, peacocks, and guinea fowl with him in his enclosure. The staff spends time with him, feeds him three times a day and does "enrichment activities" with him. Guinsberg commented that Makolo "likes to watch Cartoon Network in his night room if the weather is bad." Guinsberg said that EEP has demanded that the zoo upgrade Makolo's enclosure before it would approve another gorilla; however, the zoo does not have the funds. Guinsberg noted that the zoo would be prepared to take a bachelor group to keep Makolo company.

PRETORIA 00002628 005.2 OF 007

(Saturday Star, Nov 15, 2008)]

South Africa to Publish Carbon Storage Atlas by 2010

118. (U) Several carbon-heavy South African companies are supporting a R2 million (\$200,000) initiative to develop a South African Carbon Dioxide (CO2) Storage Atlas. The project, which is backed by Sasol, Eskom, PetroSA, Anglo American and the South African National Energy Research Institute (SANERI), will use existing geological information to identify potential sites for the possible future storage of CO2. The atlas will illustrate the distribution and ranking of potential geological CO2 storage reservoirs in South Africa, including estimated CO2 storage capacities, the main emission sources, location of industrial hubs, transportation pipelines and other factors that may have a bearing on storage feasibility. The Council for Geoscience and the Petroleum Agency South Africa plan to publish the initial assessment of storage potential by April 2010.

119. (U) The South African government has identified carbon capture

and storage (CCS) as a priority technology, given its carbon-intensive economy. South Africa is one of the world's most "emissions intensive" economies, emitting about 400 million tons of CO2 yearly, which is about 1% of total global emissions. SANERI estimates that about 60%, or 249 million tons, of these emissions are "sequestrable", with the main challenge being the identification of suitable storage sites, such as deep saline aquifers. The atlas is a first step to develop the scientific and human resource capacity necessary for commercial CCS use. SANERI Senior Manager for Fossil Fuels Dr Tony Surridge says that the next step would involve the creation of a Center for Carbon Capture and Storage in 2009 which would implement commercialization of CCS by 2016. Surridge says that, once the atlas is completed, further seismic work and drilling programs would be required.

120. (U) Surridge is convinced that South Africa has the geological capacity to store CO2. He says that preliminary geological studies have highlighted deep saline aquifers that have the potential to store between four and eleven times South Africa's annual sequestrable CO2 emissions for the next 100 years. He thinks the Karoo Basin holds much promise as do the spent oil and gas structures offshore of Mossel Bay. Surridge agrees that the

potential to use the CO2 injections to enhance oil or gas recoveries is low. He believes that the success of CCS will hinge on the future regulatory and tax regime, with companies such as Eskom and Sasol likely to pursue the technology either as a way of mitigating against carbon taxes or as a way of earning carbon credits.

SAEON and CSIR Join in Collaborative Geographical Information Service (CoGIS)

121. (U) South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON) Head Johan Pauw and Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Natural Resources and Environment Operating Unit Executive Director Khungela Njobe signed an agreement under which CSIR will design a Collaborative Geographical Information Service (CoGIS) for SAEON. CoGIS will allow the discovery, retrieval, sharing, and integration of spatial information sourced from a variety of providers connected Qof spatial information sourced from a variety of providers connected via a web-based network. SAEON contributed financially and conceptually to the development of the system. One of SAEON's core missions is to generate long-term environmental data to assist sustainable management of natural resources and habitat. SAEON's information management coordinator Avinash Chunthapursat said SAEON is assembling a team of representatives of organizations, including CSIR, Department of Minerals and Energy, Agricultural Research Council (ARC), Kruger National Park and the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB). Pauw noted that South African ecosystem research has been fragmented; its data not readily accessible; and not enough variables have been included to cover the global climate change complexities.

Baby Boom at Joburg Zoo

122. (U) The Joburg zoo's first viable honey badger baby was born November 6, 2008. There have been other births, but all the cubs died within one day. The cub's mother, Bedlam, keeps the baby in her lap and is extremely protective, folding her body over the baby and becoming aggressive if anyone approaches. Honey badgers only produce offspring every 16-18 months because the mothers spend considerable time teaching their cubs skills such as climbing,

PRETORIA 00002628 006.2 OF 007

tunneling and chasing snakes.
Honey badgers are often called the most fearless of all animals.
Even lions and leopards will not attack an adult honey badger.
Johannesburg Zoo Carnivore Manager Dominc Moss says, "Pound for pound, they don't take any grief from anyone." Their loose skin makes it difficult for predators to catch them. As Moss notes: "If you grab them, they just turn in their skin and take your hand off."
The zoo has three adult honey badgers: Bedlam, her QQ;iOkQso given birth to two babies, the Zoo's first in eight years.

BirdLife SA Sues to Stop Mining

- 123. (U) BirdLife South Africa, supported by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) based in the UK, has applied to the South African High Court for judicial review of a British-South African company's prospecting rights in the Wakkerstroom/Luneburg region, an area of wetlands and grassland east of Pretoria. Wakkerstroom's high altitude grasslands host more than 300 bird species, and more than 100 plants. Over eighty percent of all bird-watching trips in South Africa include Wakkerstroom in their schedules. Conservationists contend that Delta Mining's prospecting rights are illegal and pose a serious conservation threat. They warn that extraction of coal from a 200-square kilometer section of the Wakkerstroom/Luneburg region would destroy habitats, including those used by South Africa's national bird, the blue crane, which is listed as "Vulnerable to Extinction" on the
- 124. (U) International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. Conservationists believe that four major rivers with sources in the region could be polluted by mining operations. RSPB Africa Specialist Paul Buckley said the proposed mining "is one of the biggest threats to South Africa's wildlife to emerge for decades." BirdLife SA and RSPB maintain that Delta's prospecting rights were obtained without proper consultation with affected landowners, and without adequately taking into consideration the severe conservation impacts of mining. Delta Mining was awarded prospecting rights for the Wakkerstroom/Luneburg area in August and November 2007. The conservationists argue that

the rights were awarded in violation of the National Environmental Management Act and the Minerals & Petroleum Resources Development Act, both of which require consultation with interested and affected parties, which in this case includes landowners and environmental groups, such as BirdLife South Africa, WWF-South Africa, and the Ekangala Grasslands Trust.

125. (U) Birdlife SA Policy and Advocacy Division Official Carolyn Ah Shene stated that, "The Wakkerstroom/Luneburg region is irreplaceable and a significant area of this important natural heritage will be destroyed if the mining goes ahead." She added that the area is "one of South Africa's prize natural possessions, attracting large numbers of tourists who visit the region to see its unique landscapes, plants and animals." Delta Mining and the South African Government's Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) oppose the application. Delta Mining claims in its Environmental Qthe application. Delta Mining claims in its Environmental Management Plan that there are "no threatened species on the site." Conservationists respond that thirteen of South Africa's bird species are found only in this grassland region and this area was designated an Important Bird Area by BirdLife South Africa in 2001.

Recreational Fishers and Scientists Cooperate in Shark Research

126. (U) Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Marine and Coastal Management (DEAT/MCM) and the West Coast Shore Angling Association (WCSAA) cooperated in a joint venture on November 8, 2008 to tag as many smoothhound sharks as possible as part of research into the population of smoothhound sharks in the Langebaan Lagoon system. This joint venture, officially named the Langebaan Lagoon Smoothhound Shark Derby 2008, is a tag-and-release tournament aimed at promoting collaborative opportunities between marine scientists and fishers to strengthen the sustainable management of marine resources. The primary recreational catches in the lagoon are smoothhound shark, white stumpnose, and elf fish. The tag-and-recapture experiment will help identify the stock size of these species within the Langebaan/Saldanha Bay area; fishery managers will use the results to develop sustainable management fishery plans.

PRETORIA 00002628 007.2 OF 007

127. (U) The tournament will be also be used to introduce the Green Marine Angling program, an initiative of the South African Shark Conservancy (SASC), in collaboration with the DEAT/MCM. This program emphasizes responsible angling and teaches methods to minimize the effects of poor handling when releasing fish. DEAT/MCM scientists will participate with anglers and provide assistance with the tagging. Smoothhound sharks are one of the most frequently caught species in South Africa, targeted by commercial trawlers, long-lining operations, line-fishing boats, and shore-based recreational fishermen. These sharks are abundant in bays with soft substrate such as Langebaan Lagoon, where they feed on benthic invertebrates. Sharks are slow growing animals, mature late and produce small numbers of offspring. These life-history traits make them vulnerable to over-exploitation.

Blue Flag Beaches Announced

- 128. (U) South Africa launched the eighth season of Blue Flag Beaches on November 5, 2008 with thirty-five participating beaches. Nineteen of the thirty-five received official Blue Flag accreditation. The Blue Flag program was introduced in November 2001, and has grown significantly since then. The success of the Blue municipalities to provide beach-goers and tourists with world class beaches offering safe, clean and well-managed facilities. A blue flag beach must meet environmental standards, including maintaining environmental management of the coastline. South Africa was the first country outside of Europe to implement the Blue Flag program. Today thirty-eight countries participate with almost 3,500 Blue Flag beaches and marinas around the world.
- 129. (U) South African beaches that have received 2008-2009 Blue Flag accreditation include: Margate; Ramsgate main beach; Marina beach, Southbroom; Hibberdene; Kelly's beach, Port Alfred; Wells Estate, Port Elizabeth; Humewood beach, Port Elizabeth; King's beach, Port Elizabeth; Hobie beach, Port Elizabeth; Dolphin beach, Jeffrey's Bay; Lappiesbaai beach, Stilbaai; Grotto beach, Hermanus; Hawston beach, Hermanus; Bikini beach, Gordon's Bay; Mnandi Beach, Cape

Town; Clifton 4th, Cape Town; Camps Bay, Cape Town; Muizenberg, Cape Town; and Strandfontein, Cape Town. Several beaches narrowly missed achieving Blue Flag status, primarily because of the failure to meet management challenges such as water sampling. (Blue Flag beaches are monitored every two weeks to ensure safe, healthy swimming conditions, some municipalities encounter problems in complying with the necessity of regular water sampling.)

130. (U) One on-going challenge in South Africa is the need to manage infrastructure and coastline damage resulting from changing climatic conditions. Over the past eighteen months, high seas and waves over 10 meters high almost destroyed some Blue Flag beaches. Those municipalities devoted resources to the rehabilitation of these beaches and their Blue Flag status was quickly re-established. South Africa is beginning a Blue Flag Marina program in the near future, and is in the process of expanding the program into the SADC countries. South Africa hopes to launch Blue Flag programs in the Indian Ocean within the next year, especially in Madagascar and Mauritius.

Monthly Factoid

131. (U) Walt Disney serves South African wine exclusively at its Q31. (U) Walt Disney serves South African wine exclusively at its 73-acre Animal Kingdom Lodge in Walt Disney World in the Florida.